

## **SENIOR CENTER/(COA)**

Fiscal Year 2009

**PRINCIPAL GOAL:** To run a multi-purpose Senior Center that serves as the community focal point for the provision of services to the elderly. The Center works to initiate, facilitate, coordinate, and/or provide those services, which in the broadest sense enhance dignity, support independence, maintain health, and promote the involvement of Amherst's elderly in the general community.

### **THE SENIOR CENTER: A VITAL COMMUNITY RESOURCE**

Whether it's simply reading our 16-page **bi-monthly newsletter, *THE SENIOR SPIRIT*** or coming in daily for the hot lunch program, Amherst's older residents have come to rely on the Senior Center. Here are examples of some of our program and service offerings in FY 09:

**CLINICS:** foot care, ear irrigation, massage, blood pressure, flu/health fair, hearing aid repair, psychological counseling and free consultations two days a week with an R.N.

**FITNESS PROGRAMS/CLASSES:** Strength training, gentle fitness, Tai Chi, folkdance, gentle yoga, twice weekly walking club, line dancing, ballroom dancing, dancercise, Osteoporosis Progressive Resistance Training Exercise, EnhanceFitness®, and Joyful Yoga Dance.

**ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES:** Using the Internet; Understanding Perspective When Drawing; Figure Drawing; Portrait Drawing; Pre-Beginning Computer; knitting; sewing; quilting; watercolor/oil painting; cooking; financial management; The Endlessly Developing Cosmos; The Artist's Way Workshops; Healthy Eating for Successful Living in Older Adults; Arthritis Prevention and Treatment: Life-Style Changes That Work; Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain; Color Theory & Color Mixing Painting Class; Collage Workshop; One & Two Point Perspective Drawing Class; Cityscapes Drawing Class; Matting Your Work Drawing Class; ABC Basics of Computer; Email and Word Processing Basics; How to Manage Photographs & Images on your Computer & How to Listen to Your Computer; VNA & Hospice of CDH Falls Prevention Classes; Tell Your Story Creative Writing Classes; Gluten Free Cooking; Darwinian Evolution and Physics; Holiday Theme Drawing Mixed Media Drawing; Cosmology-Theoretical Physics and Reality.

**DISCUSSION/SUPPORT GROUPS:** New Options, Audio-Book Group for Visually Impaired Persons, Aging Together.

**SOCIAL RECREATION:** Musical Showcases, bus/van/plane trips, Senior Center 40th Anniversary Banquet, Tag Sale, Public Safety picnic, Thanksgiving Dinner, bridge, Scrabble, Chinese mah-jongg, grocery bingo, Volunteer Awards Social, Casino Night Hosted by UMass Finance Society, Singing Supper Hosted by Amherst College, Hawaiian Night Hosted by UMass Psychology of Aging Class; Singing with Lori Sunshine, Holiday Concert/Party, Colgate Thirteen A Capella Concert.

**EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS/WORKSHOPS:** Diabetes Basics; Making Connections: Diabetes and Heart Health; Hospice Overview; Sleep Changes & Disorders; Using an Urgent Care Center; High Blood Pressure; APD Identity Theft Presentation; Long Term Care; Bright Light Therapy; Indigestion and Gastro-esophageal Reflex; Well Women Care; "Pack Your Bag"

Individual Medication Review; BCBS Health Plan Options for People With Medicare; Vascular Problems, Claudication, Vascular Veins; The Aging Brain; Allergies--Causes, Diagnosis, Treatments; Cosmetic Surgery; SALT Council presentation: Consumer Awareness: Be a Savvy Consumer; Emergency Preparedness; APD Seminar on Lost Elder Program; Successful Aging; Holistic Physical Therapy; Successful Aging; Female Bladder Control; Recent Scientific Findings on Arthritis; Arthritis Preventing/Reversing Exercise Programs; Nutrition and Arthritis; Tremors; Anti-Coagulation Clinic; Type II Diabetes; Respiratory Problems; Keeping Warm, Keeping Safe Panel Discussion; Peace Corps Talk; Wills and Revocable Living Trusts; Understanding the Grieving Process and Responding in a Loving Way; Ear and Nose Problems; Fibromyalgia; Treatment of Common Spinal Problems in Baby Boomers; Enhancing Vitality; Healing Ourselves.

**SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS:** HVES (Highland Valley Elder Services) Title III Congregate hot lunch program, Meals on Wheels evening hot supper through the University of Massachusetts, HVES Title III Home Delivered hot lunch, AARP Tax Assistance, Tax Exemption Seminar (Assessor's Office), leaf raking, personal care/homemaking referral, friendly visitor program, social worker counseling/I+R, Brown Bag monthly groceries through Western Mass. Food Bank, Food Box monthly groceries through Amherst Survival Center, free weekly bread/produce giveaway, emergency food pantry, volunteer driving, SHINE health insurance counseling, tax assistance, Tax Work-Off intake, subsidized van ticket sales, farmers' market coupon distribution, medical rides and free wheelchair and equipment loan closet, free smoke detector program with Amherst Fire Department, and partnership with the SALT Council to provide services such as house numbering, RUOK, File of Life, 911 Cell Phone distribution, SAFE Elder project.

### **SENIOR CENTER CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY**

The Amherst Senior Center opened its doors at 17 Kellogg Avenue in 1968 thanks to the efforts of the Council on Aging established the previous year by a vote of Town Meeting while Allen Torrey was Town Manager. Events marking the occasion this 40th anniversary year included marching with a commemorative banner in the Fourth of July Town parade and a special banquet planned for October 19th, 2008, at the Bangs Community Center. An historical booklet commemorating the 40 years is being written by Senior Center Director Nancy Hirsh Pagano and is expected to be published in September 2009.

### **COUNSELING CENTER**

The Counseling Center has continued to provide psychotherapy to eligible elders and caregivers of elders. A new LICSW was hired as the previous one was unable to continue. Presently, the Senior Center is in the midst of discussions with ServiceNet for the LICSW to be a per diem therapist paid through ServiceNet. This would allow the Counseling Center to continue without relying on grant funding. Through the end of FY 09, there were 12 elders served with a total of 88 psychotherapy sessions provided.

### **EMERGENCY FUND**

In October 2009, Amherst College made an extremely generous donation of \$40,000 to the Town. The Emergency Fund with \$10,000 was set up with the Town for the Senior Center to utilize in assisting elders with paying utility arrears, home heating fuel arrears, unpaid medical bills and other emergency situations in elder households. A sub-committee of the Council on Aging developed policies for the use of the funds. 13 elder households utilized \$2,763.90 of the fund during the winter of 2008-09. Donations and repayments received to deposit back into the fund totaled \$675.25.

### **ELDER SERVICE TEAM**

The Elder Service Team was developed to respond to situations where an elder has been identified by a community member or a first responder, as possibly being at risk. The Team is comprised of a member of the Fire Department, Police Department, Health Inspections and the Senior Center. The Senior Center is notified of the elder and the situation. If the elder is still at home, s/he is visited by Maura Plante, Senior Center, and Gary Courtemanche, Health Inspections. The living environment is assessed, information about services is relayed to the elder and appropriate referrals are made with follow-up provided when needed. Situations where hoarding is a problem have been the majority of cases the team has dealt with.

### **TAX WORK-OFF PLAN**

The Tax Work-Off Plan enables elders (age 60 and above) whose primary residence is in Amherst and who meet the income guidelines, to work up to 100 hours for a \$750 reduction in property taxes per calendar year. The work, performed in Town departments does not replace any employee positions. There presently are 30 slots and over this past fiscal year there were 32 participants working in the following departments: Senior Center, Jones Library, Leisure Services, Collectors, Elementary Schools, and the DPW. There are many Tax Work-Off participants who work more than the 100 hours; that extra time is donated to the Town. Intake and placement is handled by Senior Center Social Worker, Maura Plante.

### **MYSENIORCENTER®**

With a combination of funding from the Town of Amherst IT Department and monies from a Senior Center gift account, the Senior Center was able to purchase the MySeniorCenter® data collection program and put it into use in the fall of 2009. Each participant in our program registers giving us emergency and other profile data. Their use of senior center programs and services is tracked through the use of a swipe card, similar to that used at the supermarket to scan food. This gives us the statistics we need to prepare our Department of Elder Affairs and Town of Amherst Annual Report and is also very helpful when applying for grants.

### **SENIOR HEALTH SERVICES UPDATE**

Senior Health Services staffed by a registered nurse, provides a variety of health services to community seniors including blood pressure monitoring, blood glucose testing, medication information, weight monitoring, nutrition information, wound and skin assessment, ear and throat inspection and assistance with responding to a variety of health care needs.

In addition to clinics offered in the bubble room at the Senior Center on Mondays and Thursdays, the nurse has provided community clinics at Ann Whalen Apartments and Clark House Apartments and has made home visits for those in need. In the fiscal year ending June 09, more than 800 client contacts were logged for 88 seniors served by the program.

Special programs provided by Senior Health Services over the year included two presentations by the nurse on diabetes and a support group concerned with the issues of aging called "Aging Together" that was co-facilitated with spiritual counselor and bereavement specialist Norma Palazzo. Additionally, the nurse provided clinical oversight to UMASS nursing students who participated in the opening of Clark House Wellness program that continues into this year.

It is important to note that the Amherst Senior Center's Senior Health Services program, receives no Town funding, but continues to grow and thrive thanks to donations and grants. The annual \$10,000 donation from Amherst residents Joseph and Dorothy Gavin is the primary funding for

the Bangs-based twice-weekly clinics. The two grants received in FY 08, \$5,000 from Cooley Dickinson Hospital and \$1,625 from The Amherst Club, also continue to assist in the provision of outreach nursing services.

Other health services offered at the Senior Center include: fee-for-service ear irrigation and foot care clinics with RNs; weekly therapeutic massage clinics; free twice monthly ear irrigation clinics with volunteer, Dr. Daniel Clapp; and approximately 24 health seminars with local health professionals organized by Shirley Packard, RN.

### **TEN YEAR COA SURVEY UNDERWAY**

Every ten years since 1970, our COA has conducted a comprehensive survey to ascertain the needs of the older population and determine how well they are being met by the ASC and other agencies. Our 2010 survey will more broadly evaluate the general well-being of the Amherst population 50 years of age and older. A COA Ad Hoc Survey Committee has been planning for the survey over the last year and contracted in the spring of '09 with Dr. Randall Stokes of the UMass SADRI to be the project director. He has generously offered to work Pro Bono. The \$8,500 funding needed for the survey will be used for materials, postage and the services of a graduate hourly employee. Monies from the Friends of the Amherst Senior Center (a 501C-3) and a Senior Center gift account will be used.

### **"FRIENDS OF THE AMHERST SENIOR CENTER"**

The Friends of the Amherst Senior Center, a 501C-3 corporation established in 2007, raised \$19,745.37 in FY 09 to help support the services and programs of the Senior Center. Monies came primarily from individual donations in response to two campaigns announced in *The Senior Spirit*, the Senior Center's newsletter. One was the annual December solicitation and one was in support of a S.C. 40th Anniversary solicitation. Additionally, this year the Friends also received \$6,910 from a bequest by former Amherst resident Phyllis Joyce; about \$500 from a fundraiser by students in Professor Susan Whitbourne's Psychology of Aging class; and \$533 from the UMass Amherst Community Charitable Campaign. The Friends of the Senior Center is in the process of fine-tuning its bylaws after completing its first full year of operation.

### **BUDGET CUTS**

Our Program Assistant position was eliminated in the FY 10 budget. The employee in that 20 hour-per-week position was the Volunteer Coordinator, who worked with approximately 100 college students, placing and supervising them in a variety of volunteer opportunities both in the Senior Center and as Friendly Visitors with isolated elders in the community. Her job responsibilities have been delegated to the Social Worker, Maura Plante and the Director, Nancy Pagano, with the unfortunate consequence that there will be fewer student volunteers due to time constraints. With one fewer staff person, other changes instituted are: the Social Worker now requires that elders schedule appointments instead of there being an open door policy; hours have been established for the selling of van tickets and scheduling of rooms; and the Senior Center is now open 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM instead of 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM. Our Center Activities line item has been reduced from \$3,000 to \$0, our Office Supplies remained at \$1,000 as did the dues & memberships line at \$360.

### **UPDATE ON FOOD PROGRAMS**

Our home-delivered **lunchtime** meals program which asks for only an optional donation from the participant, continues to be an essential support to elders in Amherst as they are living longer and find it difficult to shop, cook and pay for food. As fuel costs increase, the home delivered

meal becomes more and more important also as a means to afford other essentials. We have six meal delivery routes daily to residents in Amherst and Pelham and we use volunteer drivers exclusively. With the price of fuel increasing, some drivers who declined the reimbursement previously are now asking for the \$.50/mile stipend. The \$1.19 per meal we get from our HVES Title III grant to cover gas and other program expenses in FY 09 obviously doesn't cover the gas reimbursement for meal recipients living deep in Pelham or the far edges of Amherst. (Unfortunately we haven't been able to find any Pelham residents to assist in deliveries there.) The challenge of keeping drivers as fuel costs increase is a nationwide problem and ideas are being floated for how to cope, such as delivering frozen meals 2-3 times a week. We feel this would be a risky change as the well-being check, an important component of the service, would then be compromised. (Our deliverers have found several elders who have fallen or were semi-conscious or even deceased.) Additionally some elders are too frail to deal with frozen meals. Our drivers sometimes have to open the hot meal and bring the utensils to the recipient as some are so frail and disabled they can't manage those details. As you can see below, our numbers are down a bit. This year we unexpectedly lost an unusual amount of nutrition program participants: 20 died, 14 people went into nursing homes, 9 moved out of the area and 37 cancelled participation.

Our home-delivered supper-time UMASS Meals on Wheels (MOWs) program has seen another decrease of 9% in the total number of meals delivered. There were fewer participants in the program this fiscal year as compared to FY 08. There were also 5 snow days when the MOWs were cancelled due to the weather. Additionally, there were more elders who were short-term participants; these elders received the MOWs for a period of 2 – 4 weeks after a stay in a rehabilitation center or the hospital. During the intake these elders had stated that they needed the meals only until they'd regained their strength and could prepare meals on their own. The decrease could also be due to the economic downturn and elders being more conscious of their disposable income.

#### **PARTICIPATION IN FREE/LOW COST FOOD PROGRAMS**

<b>Name of Program</b>	<b>FY 05</b>	<b>FY 06</b>	<b>FY 07</b>	<b>FY 08</b>	<b>FY 09</b>
Congregate Hot Lunch	6,467 (9% increase)	6,973 (13.78% increase)	6,147 (11% decrease)	5,420 (11.8% decrease) (If no snow days we would have served 5490 meals and then the decrease would have been 10.7%)	5120 (5.6% decrease) If no snow we would have served 95 more or 5215 for a 3.8% decrease
Meals on Wheels (UMass food delivered mid-afternoon)	3,843 (1% increase)	4,250 (11% increase)	5,006 (17% increase)	4,790 (4% decrease) If no snow days we would have served 140 more and seen only a 2% decrease	4,322 (9% decrease) If no snow we would have delivered 101 more or 4423 or a 7% decrease

Home delivered meals (HVES food delivered at 11 AM)	13,6639 (6% increase)	14,435 (6% increase)	16,118 (11% increase)	16,749 (4% increase) If no snow we would have delivered 16961 meals and then the increase would have been 9.5%	16,061 (4% decrease) If no snow we would have served 103 more or 16,164 for a 3.5 % decrease
Brown Bag (Western Mass Food Bank)	735 (5% increase)	1,035 (41% increase)	1,017 (1% decrease)	1,016 (>1% change)	1,016 No change
Food Box (Survival Center food)	453 (52% increase)	450 (>1% change)	529 (17% increase)	483 (9% decrease)	543 (13% increase)
Free Bread & Produce Giveaway	2,543 (22% increase)	5,282 (52% increase)	5,493 (3% increase)	4,960 (10% decrease)	2,338 (48% decrease) Snow days, less food to give out
Grocery Pantry Emergency Food Give-away	82 (283% increase)	102 (20% increase)	115 (12% increase)	38 (67% decrease)	45 (19% increase)

### **IN-KIND DONATIONS**

Although resources through the Town budget are limited, the Senior Center is able to offer a wide array of programs and services because of two important categories of contributions: **volunteer time** and **in-kind donations of goods and services**.

In FY 09, approximately 9,279 hours of volunteer time was given by 325 volunteers in the following categories:

<b># of Hours Given</b>	<b># of Volunteers</b>
20 hours/week or more	-
5 hrs/wk up to 19.5 hrs/wk	5
1-5 hrs/wk	39
10hrs/yr to 50hrs/yr	162
Less than 10 hrs/yr	119

**The value of these hours, according to the Points of Light Foundation is \$181,033.29**

In-kind donations represent tangible goods or services generally considered essential for the Senior Center's operations, but not paid for out of its budget. **See the table below summarizing FY 09 In-Kind donations:**

<b>In-Kind Donation</b>	<b>Value</b>
Rent/Space (gross square feet=7,399)	\$73,000 value
Transportation--Gas	\$9,857
Utilities	46,511
Van Garaging, Gas & Service	932
Custodial/Maintenance	19,000
Plowing/Outside Maintenance	604
Durable Medical Equipment	5,489
Recognition Events	378
Donated Goods	9,899
Value of Crafts Made & Sold for Sr. Ctr.	983
Newspapers for S.C. & Home Delivered Meal Recipients thru Grant	9,685
Speakers/Presenters	12,200
Entertainers	1,725
Furniture/Equipment	1,316
Supplies	1,552
Tax work-Off, Senior Aide	24,754
Money donated, raised	4,780
Luncheons, food	230,521
Cable TV Service	540
Books/Books on Tape/Puzzles	3,500
MySeniorCenter®	6,400
Value of Driver's Time	38,901
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$502,527</b>

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hirsh Pagano, Director